

920 DISPATCH/COORDINATION CHANNELS

The following operational procedures are described to help personnel understand dispatch and coordination at various levels and locations throughout the state. These procedures will continue to change annually to improve operational procedures at all levels. The advent of interagency and co-located offices has helped reduce layering of the order process and has improved operations for all involved agencies. Although operations and order handling has improved through joint operations, unique differences will always exist and need to be recognized to minimize agency conflicts.

Land offices may work with those agencies where local agreements or memorandums of understanding exist between the Department and the agency involved.

921 AREA COORDINATION

Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NRCC)--State and Federal Coordinator's Office--This level of coordination is commonly referred to as "Geographic Area Coordination." Currently, DNRC, the Department of the Interior (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service, Region 1 are co-located and continue to progress towards a more interagency operation. Specific contacts and procedures are handled by NRCC dispatchers and coordinators and are explained in the following paragraphs:

A. NATIONAL GUARD (NG)

All fire orders for personnel and equipment from the Montana National Guard must go through the NRCC. The coordinator or dispatcher will order the NG through the State Disaster and Emergency Services (D&ES) Division in Helena. Use of the guard requires a Governor's proclamation, which is handled through the D&ES Division. No local orders or contacts are to be made by dispatch or zone coordination centers unless prior approval has been received from the NRCC. This policy has also been agreed to by cooperating federal fire agencies. The only exception is that any of the agencies cooperating with the National Guard (USFS, BLM, BIA, NPS, DNRC) under the master agreement may make direct requests to local National Guard armories for use of their facilities. The local armory is required to follow up with notification to NG headquarters in Helena. For more information refer to the NRCG/MT, NG Agreement in DNRC's (200) Fire Administration Manual.

B. FEDERAL AGENCIES

All orders that are for resources other than what are available on the local National Forest, BLM District, BIA Reservation, National Park, FWS District, Interagency Dispatch Center, or Zone Coordination Center must

go through the NRCC. Specific guidelines, where noted, are to be followed as exceptions to the general guidelines.

C. DEPARTMENT & MISSOULA COMPLEX

1. **Communications Personnel**--All dispatch and zone coordination centers may work directly with private, local, state, or federal communications shops within their areas when requesting communications personnel during fire suppression activities. **All** other requests for radio repair must go through the NRCC, unless prior arrangements have been made.
2. **Aircraft**--The land offices may work with the local contractors and protection agencies that have aircraft available. **All** other fire suppression requests for aircraft must go through the NRCC, unless prior arrangements have been made.
3. **Missoula Staff**--In placing orders for Missoula staff personnel, the Missoula Interagency Dispatch Center (MIDC) will directly contact the individuals on the pre-approved call out list. The list will be updated and furnished to MIDC by the various offices. If the individuals cannot be contacted, MIDC will try and contact the designated representatives for the office.

The following are the designated representatives for the offices listed:

1. **Fire & Aviation Management Bureau**--Individual Fire Bureau personnel may be contacted directly by MIDC for suppression duty. Contact will be based on the approved listing provided to MIDC by the Bureau.

NOTE: All requests for Fire Bureau, Equipment Development Center (EDC) shop mechanics will be made through the MIDC. Contact will then be made to the EDC shop by the MIDC.

2. **Forest Management Bureau**--Any of the Section Supervisors.
3. **Service Forestry Bureau**--Any of the Section Supervisors.
4. **Business Management Bureau**--Bureau Chief.
5. **Missoula Water Resources Regional Office**--Manager.
6. **Department (Capitol-Based)**--All requests for the use of Department staff personnel will be made through the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center (HIDC). Helena-based Central

Management Division (CMD) personnel are contacted directly and are responsible for informing and obtaining approval from their immediate supervisor.

922 ZONE COORDINATION

Zone Coordination Centers will fill overhead needs from local forces (private, State, tribal, local and federal) within the zone. **All** other requests for fire overhead (except where noted under the NRCC good neighbor policy) will come through the NRCC.

A. EASTERN ZONE COORDINATION (BILLINGS DISPATCH CENTER)

The Billings Dispatch Center (BDC) was initially established to relieve the day-to-day fire suppression workload, consolidate resources and to provide support on multiple large fire incidents for the interagency community in the Billings area. The center consists of the following interagency groups: the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management and, upon request, the State of Montana. The Billings Dispatch Center is being handled as a zone support center.

The Southern Land Office (SLO) Area Manager is the State Zone Coordinator for the use of local government and state resources within the area encompassed by the three east side land offices (NELO, ELO, SLO) to BDC. Under this concept the Northeastern, Southern, and Eastern Land Offices may request or provide local government and state resources through BDC to any agency within the zone.

The NRCC will contact the BDC when requesting any resources that may come from the area encompassed by the three land offices. BDC will request, through the State Zone Coordinator, the use of any available local government and state resources within the three land offices.

The establishment of joint operations in BDC should be along the following general guidelines:

If any of the three eastside land offices (NELO, ELO, SLO) are involved with a major county support fire and are processing orders through the BDC, then the BDC State Zone Coordinator should offer dispatch personnel to BDC, especially if the potential exists for going beyond the BDC's available zone resources or normal center manning hours.

B. NORTHWEST ZONE COORDINATION CENTER

The Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center (FIDC) also fills the role as the Northwest Zone Coordination Center. They coordinate requests for resources available on the Northwestern Land Office and Glacier National Park. Requests from the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NRCC) will go to this zone center for any resources available within the zone. The Kootenai National Forest and the Flathead National Forest would go to the NRCC for resource requests.

C. CENTRAL ZONE COORDINATION CENTER

Helena Interagency Dispatch Center (HIDC) also fills the role as the Central Zone Coordination Center, but operations are somewhat different than the Northwest Zone. This office mainly coordinates the use of state, federal, and local resources within the identified zone. Requests from NRCC for state resources are basically as follows:

1. Requests for all state resources within the Central Land Office units (except for Dillon Unit overhead) go to HIDC.
2. Requests for state and local equipment and overhead from the Dillon Unit go directly to the Dillon Dispatch Center (DIDC).
3. Requests for state and local equipment and overhead from the Conrad Unit go directly to the Great Falls Dispatch Center.

D. MISSOULA INTERAGENCY DISPATCH CENTER (MIDC)

The Southwestern Land Office, Lolo National Forest, Bitterroot National Forest, and BIA Flathead Agency have formed an interagency support zone center. A lead dispatcher handles requests for all agency resources within the zone.

**The Southwestern and Northwestern Land Offices may work directly with the BIA, Flathead Agency, for local equipment and crews.*

E. SOUTH CENTRAL ZONE COORDINATION CENTER

Requests for state and local equipment and overhead from the Bozeman Unit go directly to the Bozeman Dispatch Center (BZC).

923 DISPATCHING

A combination of both individual and interagency initial attack dispatch centers exist within the state. Basic procedures for DNRC operations within either type are the same.

A. HELENA INTERAGENCY DISPATCH CENTER (HIDC)

Initial attack dispatch of resources on Helena National Forest and Helena Unit. Assistance to counties within all land office units except Dillon Unit.

B. DILLON INTERAGENCY DISPATCH CENTER (DIDC)

Initial attack dispatch of resources on Beaverhead National Forest, Deer Lodge Forest and Dillon Unit. Assistance to counties within Dillon Unit.

C. FLATHEAD INTERAGENCY DISPATCH CENTER (FIDC)

Initial attack dispatch on Flathead National Forest, Kalispell Unit, Stillwater Unit, and Swan Unit. Assistance to counties within Kalispell, Stillwater, and Swan Units (Flathead and Lake counties).

D. KOOTENAI INTERAGENCY DISPATCH CENTER (KIDC)

Zone Support and Initial attack dispatch on Kootenai National Forest and Libby Unit. Assistance to counties within Libby Unit (Lincoln County).

E. PLAINS UNIT DISPATCH CENTER

Initial attack dispatch on Plains Unit and assistance to counties within unit (Sanders County). Zone support provided by Missoula Dispatch Center.

F. CLEARWATER AND ANACONDA UNIT DISPATCH CENTERS

Initial attack dispatch on each of the units and assistance to counties within unit. (Includes Seeley Lake (SLCC) and Garrison IA Station.)

G. MISSOULA DISPATCH CENTER

Initial attack dispatch on Missoula Unit and Lolo National Forest. Assistance to counties within Missoula Unit.

H. LEWISTOWN INTERAGENCY DISPATCH CENTER

Zone support and assistance to counties within the NELO.

I. MILES CITY INTERAGENCY DISPATCH CENTER

Zone support and assistance to counties within the ELO.